MONIER-WILLIAMS

MONISM, PANTHEISM AND DUALISM

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SPECIAL.

ological Semina The Presence at the Meeting of those whose studies have lain especially in the direction of the subject taken up is always important; and if any such are unavoidably prevented from attending, the Council will be much gratified by receiving their MS. comments, which will be read after the Paper.

VICTORIA INSTITUTE. - Paper to be read at a Meeting of the Members and Associates, on Monday, March 10, 1890, at Eight o'clock, to be held at the House of the Society of Arts, John Street, Adelphi, near Charing Cross, W.C.

REMARKS ON THE MONISM, PANTHEISM, AND DUALISM OF BRAHMANICAL AND ZORO-ASTRIAN PHILOSOPHERS. By Sir M. Monier-WILLIAMS, K.C.I.E., D.C.L., Boden Professor of Sanskrit, Oxford.

N the present paper I propose to draw the attention of this Society to the principal this Society to the principal monistic, pantheistic, and Jualistic theories of Indian philosophers-whether Brahmans or Parsis-with the object of pointing out that these theories, although apparently contradictory, are in reality closely connected with each other, as well as with the polytheistic doctrines and practices of modern Hinduism.

Perhaps other members of this Society may be induced by my remarks to draw attention to some of the parallel lines of thought in European systems of philosophy.

I ought at the outset to explain that my observations will be founded quite as much on the conversations which I had with living learned men during my travels in India, as on the ancient philosophical writings of Hindus and Zoroastrians.

Clearly the first difficulty is to settle exactly what is meant by the terms Monism, Pantheism, and Dualism.

Without pretending to any special knowledge of the philo-A3

sophical terms current in Europe, I believe I am right in stating that Monism is a term which may be fairly used to express the doctrine that only one Being really exists—or, in other words, that everything is resolvable into one eternal Essence, and into one only.

Pantheism, again, so far as I understand this vague expression, generally means that, whatever the one infinite Essence or Substance, whom we call God, may be, the Universe or all Nature is identical with that one God, or again that God is identical with the Universe (not merely immanent in it).

Dualism, on the other hand, is a term which is generally employed to express the existence of two co-eternal principles, neither of which is the product of the other.

But there may be different kinds of Monism, Pantheism, and Dualism.

For example, there may be a kind of Monism which consists in believing that matter is the only really existing thing, and that Spirit is merely a form or modification of Matter.

Again, there may be another kind of Monism which, like the Monism of the Indian Vedānta, teaches that Spirit is the only really existing (Sanskrit pāramārthika) thing, and that material (jaḍa) forms are merely modifications or illusory (prātibhāsika) manifestations of this one all-pervading Spirit.

Or, again, there may be another kind of Monism which substitutes the term "Mind" for "Spirit," maintaining that Mind (including, of course, volition) is the only eternally existing Essence, and that Mind creates or evolves out of itself all material organisms, and the whole external world.

It should be noted, however, that this idea of Mind is opposed to the doctrine of Indian philosophers, who make Mind (manas) an internal organ (antaḥ-karaṇa) developed by and belonging to the perishable body, and occupying an intermediate position between the organs of perception (such as the eye, ear, &c.) and the organs of action (such as the hand, foot, &c.), its sole function being to serve as an instrument or inlet of thought to the Spirit.

Again, some writers substitute the term "Soul" for "Spirit," or employ these two expressions as if they were identical.

Perhaps the chief objection to the indiscriminate use of the terms "Spirit" and "Soul," at least in Indian philosophy, appears to be that our word "Soul" conveys the idea of liability to affections, passions, and feelings, whereas pure Spirit, according to the Vedānta, is not liable to emotions of any kind, and does not even possess self-consciousness, or a sense of individuality. It is *Nir-guna*, quality-less. It is for this reason that the term "Self" sometimes preferred to both "Spirit" and "Soul" by English translators of the Sanskrit word Ātman, seems open to exception.

Finally, I may note here a form of Monism said to be in favour with some European Scientists, who maintain that what is termed "Vital Force" (Sanskrit Prāṇa?) is the only existing Essence, and that this all-pervading Energy evolves infinite forms of matter which are periodically dissolved, and by their dissolution furnish a constant succession of raw material for the reproduction and perpetuation of life.

Clearly every one of these monistic theories may be regarded as also pantheistic, so that there will be as many different kinds of Pantheism as of Monism.

As to the term Dualism, it is evident that there may be one kind of Dualism which simply asserts that Spirit and Matter exist as separate co-eternal substances.

Another kind of Dualism—and this I may remark is the true Dvaita of Sanskrit philosophers—simply asserts the duality of Spirit, meaning by the term Duality that God's Spirit and man's Spirit have had a real separate existence from all eternity, and will continue to have such an existence.

This dualistic theory might more suitably be called pluralistic, inasmuch as it holds that human spirits are not only distinct from the Supreme Spirit, but from each other, and are infinitely numerous.

Again, the term Dualism may be used to express the eternal separate existence of two opposing principles—the respective originators of good and evil, knowledge and ignorance—as exemplified in the teaching of Zoroaster, and in the later philosophy of the Manicheans. The idea may have arisen from the supposed impossibility of believing that the Creator of good is also the Creator of evil; or else from a simple belief in the existence of some eternal law of antagonism as a necessary factor in the equilibrium of the Universe.

Turning now more particularly to the monistic, pantheistic, and dualistic theories current in India, I may remark that there are two well-known Sanskrit philosophical terms, Dvaita and Advaita; of which the two equivalent cognate English expressions are, Duality and Non-duality.

But in an introduction to the Advaita philosophy, just published by Pandit Dvivedī, Professor of Sanskrit at Bhaunagar, the word Monism, as well as Non-duality (equivalent, he says, to "inseparability"), is used for Advaita.

And I may state that almost every learned Brāhman in India is a believer in the spiritual Monism of the Vedānta philosophy, while materialistic Monism is thought to be the doctrine of herctics.

The Vedāntist, in fact, professes to be more orthodox than any other teacher, because his belief is founded on the inner doctrine of the Veda, which, according to him, is absolutely monistic, and inculcates spiritual Pantheism.

True Brāhmanism, he asserts, lays down as its fundamental dogma that there is only one really existing Essence, and that that Essence is pure Spirit.

This dogma is expressed by three Sanskrit words: *Ekam* eva advitiyam, "there is only one Being, no second."

In this favourite phrase the one Beiug is designated by a neuter termination, yet a Brāhman will often apply to that Being the ancient name Ātmā (nom. case of Ātman), "the breathing Spirit," or "Breath,"* which is a Sanskrit masculine noun.

In his daily worship,[†] too, he will often repeat a well-known hymn of the Rig-veda, which adopts another masculme title of the one Spirit, namely, Purusha ("the one representative man"?), a name which has no trustworthy etymology.

Then he often designates that Being by a very remarkable name, *Sac-cid-ānanda*, which is a compound word, or three words combined in one, ending in a masculine termination, and denoting one Essence, composed of three inherent faculties, "Existence, Thought, Joy," which are inseparable.

Sometimes he prefers the simple name Cid (C = our Ch) or Cit, that is, the faculty of "Thought," which is a feminine noun; or again, Caitanya, "abstract Thought," which is neuter.

In real truth, however, he most commonly designates the one Being by a name which is incompatible with all idea of sex.

He calls the one Being Brahmă, a neuter word implying "growth," "expansion," "evolution," "universal pervasion."

It is only when that Being becomes the Evolver that he is called by a masculine name, Brahmā.[‡]

This one eternal neuter Essence (in the Illusion by which it

^{*} I am aware that different etymologies of this word are given, but I prefer deriving it from the Sanskrit root *an*, to breathe; *cf*. German *athen*.

 $[\]dagger$ That is, in the Pancayatana ceremony; see my Brahmanism and Hindüism (John Murray), p. 414. The final act of adoration in this ceremony is as follows:—Veneration to the infinite and eternal male (Purnsha), who has thousands of names, thousands of forms, thousands of feet, thousands of eyes, thousands of heads, &c. (see p. 415).

[‡] The masculine deity Brahmā is not eternal, but lapses back into the neuter Brahmā. The crude base Brahman (in grammar) stands for both.

is overspread) is to the external world and to the human spirit what yarn is to eloth, what milk is to curds, what clay is to a jar.

From him is everything born, in him it breathes, in him it is dissolved (according to the Sanskrit formula *tajjalān*).

The Vedāntist's own personal identification with the one universal Spirit is expressed by the two monosyllables *Tat tvam*, "That art thou," two words which, when combined in one, stand for all philosophical truth (tattvam).

The number One, indeed, appears to have assumed the character of a kind of God in the minds of some Indian thinkers.

Hence we read in the Brihad-āraņyaka Upanishad (iv, 5) that:---

"When there is anything like duality there one sees another, one smells another, one tastes another, one speaks to another, one hears another, one minds another, one regards another, one knows another."

Then this ancient philosophical work, which represents the views of Indian metaphysicians at least 500 years B.C., goes on to assert that the One Infinite Essence "neither sees, nor smells, nor tastes, nor speaks, nor hears, nor minds, nor regards, nor knows."*

The apparent sternness of ancient Indian Monism seems to be paralleled by almost identical phases of modern German philosophical thought. According to Dean Mansel :---

"With German philosophers the root of all mischief is the number two-Self and Not-self, Ego and Non-ego.

"The (German) pantheist tells me that I have not a real distinct existence and unity of my own, but that I am merely a phenomenal manifestation or an aggregate of many manifestations of the one infinite Being."

Then again, we know that a favourite dogma with all Asiatie pantheists is, *Ex nihilo nihil fit (nāvastuno vastusiddhi*ļ or *a-sata*ļ, *saj jāyeta kutas*), "nothing is produced out of nothing;" so that if there is a Supreme Creator, he cannot ereate the external world out of nothing.

Hence he evolves all visible nature out of Himself, and all nature is Himself.

And is it not the ease that some of our own modern seientists are continually telling us that all Nature is one, and that mind and matter are inseparable? or that all the elements are mere modifications of one element? or again, that

^{*} Compare Amos v, 21.

all the forces which act on the elements are mere modifications of one force; or that "everything is everything else"?*

The point to be noticed is that in India the Unitytheory was current many centuries before it was even heard of in Europe, and that there this idea is found to be compatible not only with dualistic, but with the grossest polytheistic, doctrines and practices.

I found in fact that, although, in my conversations with learned Brāhmans, they laid the greatest stress on their dogma, *Ekam eva advitīyam*, "there is only one Being, no second," they always, when questioned, admitted the truth of another Vedāntic dogma, Māyā-cid-yogo'nādih, "the union of the onc Essence with Illusion is from all cternity." In other words, the one infinite Essence is associated from all eternity with Māyā, "Illusion" (also called *Avidyā*, Ignorance), which is also an eternal Essence, though merely an illusory one.

In point of fact the modern Vedāntist holds that it is from this one Illusory Essence, eternally associated with the one Real Essence, that the whole external universe is evolved.

From this Illusory Essence, too, are evolved the separate individual spirits of men, whose sense of individuality ceases at the moment when they deliver themselves from all Illusion (or Ignorance) and attain a knowledge of the Truth, that is, of their own identity with the one spiritual Essence.

Confessedly, moreover, the Advaita or Non-duality of the Vedāntist amounts practically (that is, in the *vyāvahārika* or practical world) to a kind of Dvaita or Duality.

It is commonly said that Śankara, the great Vedāntist Teacher of the 8th century of our era, was a stern upholder of the Non-duality creed against the Dvaita, or Duality creed.

On the other hand it is commonly alleged that the chief teacher of the Duality (Dvaita) doctrine was the great Vaishṇava teacher Madhva, who is believed to have lived in the 13th century.

Strictly speaking, however, the only difference between the teaching of these two eminent philosophers was that Sankara taught that the separate spirits of men were the product of an eternal Illusion united from all eternity with the one Spiritual Essence, while Madhva taught that the spirits of men had a *real* eternal existence of their own.

* The President of the Royal Society in a recent speech quoted this saying of the eminent chemist Galen.

It is a question, indeed, whether one form of Dualism, which ultimately became formulated in the Sāņkhya system of philosophy, was not a more ancient belief in India than Advaita or Non-duality.

The idea of a second principle, as necessary to the act of creation, is vaguely implied in a text of the well-known hymn of the Rig-veda (x, 129), thus translatable :—

"In that one Being arose Desire, which was the primal germ of Mind, and the subtle bond of connection between Entity and Nullity."

Again, in an ancient Brāhmana (Satapathabrāhmana xiv, 4, 24), as well as in an ancient Upanishad (Brihad-āraŋyaka i, 3), it is affirmed that the "One Being was not happy being alone.

"He wished for a Second.

"He caused his own self to fall in twain, and thus became husband and wife."

A still older idea was the supposed marriage of a Heavenly Father (Dyo or Dyans) with Mother Earth (Prithivī) for the creation of gods, men, and all creatures.

When the Sānkhya philosophy was formulated its distinctive characteristic was the assertion of the eternal existence of two principles:

1. A Producer or creative germ, named Prakriti (but also called Māyā or "Illusion"), and

2. A Spirit (Purusha).

This Spirit, however, is not one, as in the Vedanta; but is multitudinous, each human spirit existing of itself as an independent eternal entity.

Neither the Producer nor a Spirit, however, can create by itself.

The external world (including the human frame, consciousness, feeling, individuality, and mind) is evolved out of the eternal creative germ, Prakriti, and yet only so evolved when an individual eternal spirit is associated with it.

It is abundantly clear, therefore, that the only distinction between the so-called Unity-theory of the Vedanta and the Duality of the Sānkhya system seems to be that the germ of the material world has an *illusory* eternal existence in the one system, and a *real* eternal existence in the other.

And if this be so, I think I am justified in asserting that a kind of dualistic woof everywhere underlies the monistic and pantheistic warp of Indian philosophy.

I may add that such an assertion is borne out by ocular

observation, for it is certain that the idolatrous worship of the Linga and Yoni^{*}—united in one image and symbolizing the mysterious union of the two creative principles—meets the eye of observant travellers in every part of India.

And this is not all—the student of Indian philosophieal thought, who has been brought into actual contact with the religious life and usages of the inhabitants of India in their own country, will observe in every village, and almost in every nook and corner of the land, illustrations of the remarkable fact that the Monism and Pantheism of the Vedānta are compatible with all varieties of religious belief now with Theism—now with Deism—now with Dualism now with Triadism—that is, with the worship of the Indian Triad (wrongly called the Indian Trinity), Brahmā, Vishņu, and Siva, the three gods who, with their wives, preside over creation, preservation, and dissolution respectively—and now with all the grosser polytheism, polydemonism, and fetishism associated with these three chief deities of the Hindū Pantheon.

Time will not admit of my going into this important subjeet at any greater length; it will be sufficient for me to state that, according to Indian philosophers, the one Being delights in manifesting his Essence in various forms.

He also delights in ignoring himself for a time, so that any one of his forms may do homage to another, as to a superior Being, or deal practically with another as with a distinct Being.

This alone will account for the multiplicity of divine manifestations (popularly thought to be 330 millions), worshipped or honoured as gods, although the number represented by images is not large.

And here, too, lies the secret of the great difficulty of Christianizing India according to the true meaning of Christianity.

For, according to the Brāhmanical theory. Christianity is to be accepted as an example of the one Being's many manifestations suited to Europeans.

Its excellence is even sometimes admitted; at any rate 1 found that whenever I succeeded in pointing out to thoughtful men the fundamental differences between the religion of Christians and that of Hindūs, the reply generally was that both might be true, according to the doctrine tanght by one of the oldest texts of the Rig-veda (1-164, 46), *Ekam sad*

* Only those who have studied Indian religions are likely to know that these symbols represent the phallic emblem (linga) and the emblem of the opposite sex (yoni) united. *Viprā bahudhā vadanti.* "Sages declare that the one Essence manifests himself in various ways;" just as (according to a later illustration) the metal gold, though really preserving the unity of its nature everywhere, assumes different forms, names, and uses in different places.

I must not conclude my remarks without adverting more particularly to the theory of the existence of good and evil spirits—the respective sources of good and evil.

It is well known that the eternal existence of a good and evil principle is a kind of Dualism, which is generally regarded as a distinguishing feature of the Zoroastrian philosophy.

The idea, however, is by no means exclusively Zoroastrian. The continual conflict between good and cvil spirits is a dominant idea in many other religious systems.

In Sankara's commentary on the Chāndogya Upanishad (p. 26, ll. 2–8) there is a remarkable passage, describing the constant struggle between good and evil, knowledge and ignorance.

All Sanskrit literature, too, teems with descriptions of the battle continually going on between gods and evil demons; and images of the chief gods of the Hindū Pantheon frequently represent them in the act of crushing their demonantagonists.

Krishna (a form of Vishnu) is often seen bruising the head of the malignant serpent Kāliya, and Siva tramples, during a kind of wild dance, on the prostrate body of the arch-fiend Tripura.

As regards the Dualism of Zoroaster, I venture to submit briefly to this Society the explanation of it given to me by the learned Pārsīs of Bombay (especially by Mr. K. R. Cama).

Let me first remark that we read in the Gāthās, that Zoroaster began his mission by declaring that: "In the beginning there were two spirits—cach active. These are the good and the base in thought, word, and deed." "I will declare the two primeval spirits of the world, of whom the better One thus spoke to the evil One—'Neither our minds, nor our doctrines, nor our understandings, nor our belief, nor our words, nor our actions, nor our laws, nor our souls agree."

The explanation given to me was that Zoroaster, although a believer in one Supreme Being, and a teacher of Monotheism, set himself to account for the existence of evil, which could not have its source in an all-wise Creator.

He, therefore, taught that two opposite—but not opposing principles or forces, which he calls "Twins," were inherent in the nature of the Supreme Being, called by him Ahura Mazda (or in Persian Ormazd), and emanated from that Being, just as in Hindūism, Vishņu and Šiva emanate from the Supreme Being Brahmă.

These two forces were set in motion by Ahura Mazda, as his appointed mode of maintaining the continuity of the Universe.

The one was constructive, the other destructive.

One created and composed.

The other disintegrated and decomposed, but only to cooperate with the creative principle by providing fresh raw material for the work of re-composition.

Hence there could be no new life without death, no existence without non-existence.

Hence, also, according to Zoroaster, there was originally no really antagonistic force of evil opposed to good.

The creative energy was called Ahura Mazda's beneficent spirit (Spento-Mainyus), and the destructive force was called his maleficent spirit (Angro-Mainyus, afterwards corrupted into Ahriman), but only because the idea of evil is connected with dissolution.

The two spirits were merely antagonistic in name.

They were in reality co-operative and mutually helpful.

They were essential to the alternating processes of construction and dissolution, through which cosmical being was perpetuated.

The only real antagonism was that alternately brought about by the free agent, man, who could hasten the work of destruction or retard the work of construction by his own acts.

It is therefore held that the so-called dualistic doctrines of Zoroaster were compatible with the absolute unity of the one God (symbolized cspecially by Fire).

Ultimately, however, Zoroastrianism crystallized into a hard and uncompromising dualism.

That is to say, in process of time, Spento-Mainyus became merely another name for Ahura Mazda, as the eternal principle of good, while Angro-Mainyus or Ahriman became altogether dissociated from Ahura Mazda, and converted into an eternal principle of evil.

These two principles were believed to be the sources of two opposite creations which were incessantly at war.

On the one side was a celestial hierarchy, at the head of which was Ormazd; on the other side, a demoniacal, at the head of which was Ahriman.

They are as opposed to each other as light to darkness, falsehood to truth.

The whole energy of a religious Indian Pārsī in the present day is concentrated on the endeavour to make himself—so to speak—demon-proof, and this he considers can only be accomplished by absolute purity symbolized by whiteness.

He is ever on his guard against bodily defilement, and never goes out to his daily occupations without first putting on a sacred white shirt and a sacred white girdle. Even the most highly educated, enlightened, and Anglicized Pārsīs are rigorous observers of this custom, though it seems probable that their real creed has little in common with the old and superstitions belief in demons and evil spirits, but rather consists in a kind of cold monotheistic pantheism.

How far Zoroastrian dualism had affected the religious opinions of the Babylonians at the time of the Jewish captivity is doubtful, but that the Hebrew prophets of those days had to reckon with dualistic ideas seems probable from Isaiah xlv, 6: "I am the Lord, and there is none else. I form the light and create darkness. I make peace and create evil. I, the Lord, do all these things." The New Testament, on the other hand, might be thought by a superficial reader to lend some support to dualistic doctrines, inasmuch as it asserts the personality of Satan, and takes for granted the existence of evil spirits hostile to the spirits of men.

I need scarcely, however, point out that the Bible account of the origin, nature, and destiny of Satan and his angels differs, *toto cœlo*, from the Zoroastrian description of Ahriman and his host.

Nor need I add that the various monistic, pantheistic, and dualistic theories, briefly indicated by me in this paper, are utterly at variance with the Christian doctrine of a Personal, Eternal, and Infinite Being existing and working outside man and outside the material universe which He has Himself created, and controlling both, and in the case of human beings working not only outside man but in and through him.

Our Church of England Prayer Book tells us in one place that God "made all things of nothing,"* and this, no doubt, is the meaning we give to the word "create" in the first chapter of Genesis. But we are nowhere told, either in the Bible or Prayer Book, that, having created material germs on the one hand and the spirits of men on the other, He willed to endow these two distinct creations with an eternal independent separate existence and an independent capacity for selfevolution.

* See the third prayer at the end of the Marriage Service ; and compare Psalm xc, 2.

We know, indeed, that God is Spirit ($\Pi \nu \epsilon \hat{\nu} \mu a \ o \Theta \epsilon o_{S}$), and that, having ereated man's spirit with a separate personality of its own, He has endowed it with moral free agency; that is, with the power to choose or reject the good or the evil.

We know, too, that this freedom of choice is held by acute thinkers to furnish a sufficiently satisfactory explanation of the origin of evil without having recourse to the Indian method of solving the difficulty through the doctrine of metempsychosis. But the exact relationship of man's spirit to material organization is not revealed to us. Nor can we tell whether the dissolution of man's body at death releases his, spirit from all connection with even the subtlest forms of matter, so that an intermediate conscious existence of entire separation from matter is possible to it. But compare *Butler's Analogy*, Part I, Ch. 1.

What we may surely believe is that God is always creating, and that out of His eternal Workshop (if I may so speak reverently) are for ever issuing new spirits and new material forms.

Surely, too, we must believe that God is for ever superintending and supporting His ereations; and that not a single spirit and not a single material atom ean exist for a single instant without His upholding and vivifying power.

We Christians, at any rate, who feel that we depend on our Creator for life and breath and all things, may surely so interpret the words of Christ, "My Father worketh hitherto and I work."

POSTSCRIPT.

The Brāhmanieal expression for the One Infinite Being (Sac-eid-ānanda, see p. 4) has been compared with the Christian statement of God's tri-une nature—God is Life (Sat), God is Light (*i.e.*, absolute Intelligence = Cit or Chit), and God is Love—but the difference between "God is Joy (Änanda)" and "God is Love" must be noted. The sacredness of the number *three* in all Eastern systems is remarkable. In this connexion I have heard it stated that there are not a few eases in which *three* seems to exhaust all that ean be conceived of any subject, *e.g.*, Past, Present, and Future, of time; Length, Breadth, and Height. of space; Solid, Liquid, and Gaseous. of matter; and not less than three lines (a triangle) enclose a space.

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